

The SGB

The only governing board comprised of students from all four undergraduate schools, the Student Governing Board (SGB) represents political, religious, activist, and humanitarian groups on campus. Created to meet student demands for a self-governing student caucus during the '68 protests, the SGB has traditionally served as the guardian of free speech and students' rights on campus.

The most important thing to know about the SGB is that we only exist to represent and aid our groups. We always seek to make our rules as simple and unrestrictive as possible (Death to Bureaucracy!) and to always be available when our groups need us. You can always contact your SGB Representative or the whole SGB E-Board at sgb@columbia.edu with any questions you have or to get help in dealing with other groups or the administration.

The SGB E-Board consists of eleven students, a Chair, a Vice-Chair, a Treasurer, a Secretary, and seven Representatives, all elected by the 93 recognized SGB groups for one year terms starting in the Spring. All members of the SGB E-Board are active in SGB groups to ensure that they understand the needs and concerns of the community. The E-Board sets budgets for the groups, writes the SGB guidelines, manages SGB cosponsorships, and is solely authorized to handle discipline and enforce rules for SGB groups (To clarify slightly, we can discipline misbehaving SGB groups through restrictions on their budgets and activities – rule breaking individuals are disciplined through Dean's or University Discipline. For more on our judicial policy, see our website - <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/sgb/>). The SGB Representatives are the primary advocates for the groups. Your Rep should be the first person you look to if you need help with anything, from figuring out the best way to plan an event to fighting an administrative policy. For your Rep to be most effective, you should cc her/him on all of your communications with the Columbia administration and your advisors.

Every year the SGB has at least two Town Halls (attendance is mandatory for all groups) where we vote on the recognition of new groups, elect our new Board, and discuss important issues effecting our community. This year, for the first time, we will also be having events throughout the year to help groups be more effective (How to Have a Protest, Media Training, etc.) and large-scale events designed to bring the community together (A forum on the relationship between religion and activism, politics, and humanitarianism).

The Board

Chair: Jonathan Siegel CC '08 (jrs2105)

Vice-Chair: Jessie Leiken CC '08 (jml2125)

Treasurer: Arjun Kapoor CC '09 (ak2479)

Secretary: Faisal Khan CC '09 (fk2141)

Reps: Muzna Ansari BC '10 (ma2543)

Jim Downie CC '10 (jcd2143)

Ari Gardner CC '08 (ajg2104)

Hei-Yue Pang BC '10 (hp2192)

Alastair Shearman SEAS '08 (as2579)

Danielle Slutzky CC '08 (ds2037)

Jacob Taber GS '09 (jtt2116)

See our website (<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/sgb/>) to find out which Rep is assigned to your group.

Guidelines

As a rule, these guidelines are guidelines and not rules. They exist to help the larger community function at its best, but if you think you have a compelling reason to get an exemption, talk to your SGB Representative and we'll all do our best to make something work. If you haven't gotten an exemption, though, be sure to follow the guidelines to the letter – the consequences for rogue groups are severe!!

Spending Your Allocation

When spending your allocation you should always remember that we are a poor governing board and that we are all part of one community. If you overspend, your fellow groups have to pay for it out of their measly budgets and if you underspend, precious political, activist, religious, and humanitarian dollars have gone to waste.

When you overspend, you'll have to pay back a portion of your overdraft out of your next year's budget. Your debt to society will be calculated according to the following formula:

- 1) The first \$100 you overspend is forgiven – we all know how hard it is to hit your budget right on the dollar.
- 2) You have to pay back 75% of the next \$100 you overspend (So if you overspend \$200 you pay back \$75 and if you overspend \$150 you pay back \$37.50... get it?...talk to your Rep).
- 3) You have to pay back 100% of any overspending past \$200 (In other words, if you spend past \$200 you get \$125 forgiven and you pay back the rest).

If you spend so much that you can't possibly repay the debt in a single year, we may have to set up a payment plan and garnish your group's budget for generations to come... which is a pain for everyone, so please don't do that.

Be aware that although we forgive some of the debt you still should not go over your budget at all if you can help it! Even a single dollar spent past your budget may result in a decreased allocation for the next year.

If you significantly underspend, you will receive a reduced budget the following year. You cannot keep extra money for the following year! Unspent money is taken back by the SGB to help pay other groups' debts. Underspending guidelines are easy:

- 1) If you spent 80%-100% of your budget, you are a perfect group – we love you. We will increase your budget next year as much as our budget allows us to.
- 2) If you spent 65%-79% of your budget you will get no growth for the next year.
- 3) If you spent less than 65% of your budget then you risk losing recognition status and will certainly get a reduced budget in the next year – at most you'll receive a budget that is 150% of what you spent.

It is especially important to be in touch with your SGB Rep about your spending. If you know in advance that you aren't going to be able spend your whole budget this year but don't want to get a smaller budget next year you can tell your SGB Rep – we'll take the money back for this year, but you'll get a full budget again next year .

Fundraising

As would be expected, the rules for fundraising at Columbia are incredibly complicated. If you would like to raise money for your group from sources outside the University, talk to your SGB Rep and your SGB Advisor and we'll help walk you through the system.

Because we are a poor governing board, we encourage fundraising – every dollar you bring in is more money for politics, activism, religion, and humanitarianism on campus that we wish we could have given you in the first place. Groups that actively fundraise will likely be the groups with the best events – which means if you fundraise a lot and spend it well, we will love you and increase your budget. Be smart about it though – we'll only keep growing you if you're spending the money that comes in. If you have \$1,000 in raised money just sitting around, don't expect your budget to increase. If you are raising money over several years for one super-big event, make sure to be in touch with your SGB Rep so we know about it and don't just think you're hoarding cash.

Restrictions on Spending

We at SGB will never tell you how to spend your budget – we know you care about your groups and causes enough to use your own best judgment when making financial decisions. But there are a few blanket restrictions that we have to make:

- 1) No buying anything illegal... just in case you were wondering.
- 2) No spending on alcohol or alcohol related items (so no paying for alcohol proctors from your budget).
- 3) No spending on t-shirts, tote bags, or any other durable goods meant to be given out to members (so food is ok – bumper stickers are not).

These rules also apply to money you've raised from other sources. However(!), we are especially flexible with these rules (except the one about buying illegal stuff). If you think that an event with alcohol or t-shirts will somehow serve the greater good of politics, activism, religion, and humanitarianism, talk to your SGB Rep and you could be given an exemption.

Cosponsorships

Cosponsorships should be among the first things on your mind when you plan an event. It's a great way to help build community and it's a really great way to get lots of extra money from somebody else. Just remember – cosponsorships are meant to be spent. If after an event you have unused cosponsorship money left over, you have to give it back to the cosponsors if they ask for it. At the end of the year, unused cosponsorship money is treated like unused budget money and is used to help cover other groups' debts.

There are dozens of places to get cosponsorships on campus – other groups, departments, student councils, funds like the Kraft Fund or the P&P, and us. Talk to your SGB Advisor or SGB Rep for help applying for cosponsorships from any of these diverse sources.

To apply for an SGB Cosponsorship, you have to fill out an application (available on our website) and give a presentation to the SGB Board. Feel free to reach out to your SGB Rep for tips on how to really impress us. If you get an SGB Cosponsorship, you have to acknowledge that in advertising for the event by putting our snazzy logo on all of your materials.

Summer/Winter Break Spending

There can't be any programming over the summer or during winter break. Our programming is supposed to be for the whole community, and there isn't too much of a community around when school is out. You **can** spend money from your budget over these breaks if it is to help plan or prepare events that will happen when school is in session (e.g. buying stamps to send letters to prospective speakers over the summer). If you choose to spend money during breaks, however, you will have to pay out of pocket and be reimbursed when school starts again.

Websites

We encourage everyone to get a website. It's great for recruiting, spreading your message across the Universe, and self-googling. There is no reason to spend any money on the website, though – Columbia will provide you with space and you should be able to find a webmaster from within your own ranks willing to work for free (or a SEAS kid looking to beef up her/his resume... Thank you, SEAS!).

Charity Events

When planning a fundraising event for some charitable cause, make sure that you're going to actually bring in more money than you spend. Otherwise, you're not actually raising money; you're just giving SGB money to charity... which isn't allowed.

Speakers

You can definitely spend your groups' money on a speaker's honorarium. But for tax reasons you can't compensate them for travel or accommodations. Just lump everything into the speaker's fee and you should be fine.

Applying for a Budget

At the end of every year, each group has to apply for a budget for the following year. Please see our website to find the application and the deadline for submission. If you do not complete your budget packet you will not get a budget next year! As always, talk to your SGB Rep to get advice on how to write the best budget application possible.

Budget Appeals

Sometimes we make mistakes – we'll give you much less money than you deserve or charge you for an overdraft that doesn't really exist. And sometimes you make mistakes – like not submitting a budget packet and as a result not getting a budget at all. If any of these things happen, you can submit a budget appeal at the beginning of the school year to get your budget changed. You'll have to fill out an application and present to the SGB Board, exactly as you would with a cosponsorship. Check the website to find the application and the deadline for appealing.

Other Rules and Questions

There are, of course, millions of other rules for you to contend with – University Rules, Student Affairs Rules, Federal Laws. If you have any questions about those rules or if you would like further clarification of the SGB guidelines, reach out to your SGB Rep, your SGB Advisor, or the SGB Board at sgb@columbia.edu – we're all here to help.